

Goodbye

My farewell gift to you,
a skull & crossbones painted on a board with
KEEP OUT, THIS MEANS YOU on it. Take it.
I painted it myself last night. Oh, & here, take
my key to your place & use it for a nail.
Bang that warning up on your front gate for me
to see with the eyes in the back of my head.

& Before I'm out of sight, call the locksmith.
Have him install a brand new deadfall on your door.
Electrify it, should I ever so much as take a
hairpin to it, may it fry my fingers.

Make the phone company trace all calls, if
my number ever connects with yours again,
special punishment circuits, at so much a month,
should only lobotomize me through the eardrum.

Rig a loaded 12 gauge shotgun on your back porch
with wires that recognize my brain wave patterns.
Have the radar people come out
& set one up on your roof that can make out
my shape only at a distance of a mile.
Get sophisticated anti-me weaponry to
bristle all around your perimeter. Let it be programmed
to go off at my slightest personal tiptoe.

Have alarms ring. Get bells.
Put sirens in all the rooms.
Fasten bars to the windows.
Staple barbed wire to every shingle on the house.

By all means, keep me away. But just in case,
keep poisoned meat & potatoes steaming on the table
day & night. & Don't forget a bottle or two
of spiked wine of my favorite vintage, chilled
just the way I like it. & Roman candles.

Agoraphobia

From this distance, my eyes well
shaded by the deep trees, I can see
the danger they're in, those
people down there, alone,
in the middle of that huge bank
of the Russian River, where Austin Creek
flows into it.

A boat, a chair,
a camper the woman is staring into,
one hand holding the back door open, thinking
what to cook for supper.

The man
on his spine in a patio chair, hip
boots, hat down over his eyes, open chest
of tackle alongside, & two rods.

The child
squatting by the beached aluminum boat skipping
stones across the thin water.

I can see
the danger. They have wandered la-de-da
into that open zone. They have driven their camper
with all their lashed gear & belongings
down onto, out into that enormous field. They are
without

protection. Don't they know
that the unending December sky can't see them?
That it's up there with such immensity
that a fleet of Ford Camper Trucks, of Ward's
Lite-Wate Six Foot Fishers, all fully equipped,
with crowds of humanity to match would fall
equally dead center of the sky's blindness?

Can't they see
that that vast dry bank belongs to the flood to come?
That even a naked man in a desert stands no chance?
What's the matter with those people?

From where I sit,
they seem propped in the dark of something so empty, so
killing, so inhuman, I want to

warn them. We need
something to redeem our desolation,
some counter-immensity, some enemy-space we can
pit against this emptiness.

Or I would
have us all stones. Here & now. Us
& all our belongings turned into stones.
Stones in the dry rivers.
Stones in the bellies of fishes.
Stones in the deepest trenches of the oceans. Stones
heavy as planets yielding finally
to the anti-gravity of the sky.

Mother's Little Loser

Coming back from Reno, your son the loser,
alone in the car, no money, no hope, no hurry,
a rotten kid gone & done a bad thing again,

I cry out loud your name
in the plush upholstery like a knife, your name